

**Draft Summary of the Recreation and Socioeconomics Work Group Meeting  
Oroville Facilities Relicensing (FERC Project No. 2100)  
May 20, 2004**

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) hosted a meeting for the Recreation and Socioeconomics Work Group (RSWG) on May 20, 2004 in Oroville.

A summary of the discussion, decisions made, and action items is provided below. This summary is not intended to be a transcript, analysis of the meeting, or to indicate agreement or disagreement with any of the items summarized, except where expressly stated. The intent is to present a summary for interested parties who could not attend the meeting. The following are attachments to this summary:

Attachment 1	Meeting Agenda
Attachment 2	Meeting Attendees
Attachment 3	Flip Chart Notes
Attachment 4	Revised Presentation: Study R14 (Assess Regional Recreation and Barriers to Recreation)
Attachment 5	Presentation: Study R3 (Assess Relationship of Project Operations and Recreation)
Attachment 6	Presentation: Study R4 (Assess Relationship of Fish & Wildlife Management and Recreation)
Attachment 7	Presentation: Study R12 (Projected Recreation Use)
Attachment 8	Presentation: Study R18 (Recreation Activity, Spending, and Associated Economic Impacts)
Attachment 9	Presentation: Study R19 (Fiscal Impacts)
Attachment 10	Cross-resource task force meeting summary

### **Introduction**

Attendees were welcomed to the RSWG meeting. Attendees introduced themselves and their affiliations and the desired outcomes of the meeting were discussed. The meeting agenda and list of meeting attendees are appended to this summary as Attachments 1 and 2, respectively. Meeting flip chart notes are included as Attachment 3.

### **Action Items – March 25, 2004 RSWG Meeting**

A summary of the March 25, 2004 RSWG meeting is posted on the relicensing web site. The Facilitator reviewed the status of action items from that meeting as follows:

<b>Action Item #R105</b>	Present the analytical process (data collection through conclusion) as it related to the discussion on special events in the R14 study report.
<b>Status:</b>	This action item was addressed in the context of Agenda Item III (Review Comments on Reports), which focuses on those study reports that were presented at the previous Work Group meeting; please refer to this discussion below.
<b>Action Item #R106:</b>	Include study plan objectives in all of the study reports.
<b>Status:</b>	Objectives are included in all of the study reports distributed at the May RSWG meeting, and they will also be included in all study reports distributed at future meetings. It was clarified that while the objectives themselves are included, the entirety of the applicable Study Plan itself will not be appended to the Report.
<b>Action Item #R107:</b>	Notify RSWG participants regarding the status of the cross-resource meeting tentatively scheduled for April 20, 2004.

Status: RSWG participants were notified via e-mail regarding the confirmation of the cross-resource meeting scheduled for April 20, 2004. A summary of that meeting is discussed in the context of Agenda Item VI (Cultural/Land Use Cross-Resource Meeting De-brief); please refer to this discussion below.

**Action Item #R108:** Notify RSWG participants regarding the status of next month's RSWG meeting tentatively scheduled for April 29, 2004.

Status: RSWG participants were notified via e-mail regarding the cancellation of the tentatively scheduled Work Group meeting on April 29, 2004. There were problems with DWR's e-mail system that may have prevented distribution of the e-mail to all RSWG participants.

## Review Comments on Reports

The RSWG was given the opportunity to provide comments on the study reports that were presented at the March 2004 RSWG meeting. Some of these comments were recorded on the flip chart notes (see Attachment 3). A summary of the verbal comments and responses (if provided) are presented below.

The RSWG was asked to provide written comments to DWR within 30 days of the release of the study reports. DWR does not have an established protocol for responses to comments. The concept of an errata sheet is being considered where factual edits or necessary additions to the reports would be added as errata. It was noted that all written and verbal comments are part of the official record and will be used to inform preparation of the January 2005 Preliminary Draft Environmental Assessment (PDEA). Several RSWG participants indicated that because of the number of studies and the fact that these studies are often inter-related, it is difficult to provide comments within this timeframe and some participants are waiting to submit comments until all of the studies are complete; DWR indicated that they would accept comments at any time during the relicensing process, although they would prefer to receive comments within the 30-day timeframe for each report.

### **R7 – Reservoir Boating**

Jim Vogel (EDAW) responded to a set of written comments on the R7 study report that were provided by the Dangermond Group, as outlined below. These responses (in italics) will be incorporated into the report via an errata sheet where appropriate.

- The report lacks an assessment of infrastructure, including marinas, which represents a big gap in this report. *An attempt will be made to get this information, some of which was collected as part of Study R10 (Recreation Facility and Condition Inventory).*
- Add floating restrooms to the appropriate figure(s) in the report. *The location of these facilities can be added to the report figures.*
- Add more (lower) surface elevation contours for Lake Oroville to the appropriate figure(s) in the report. *Additional contours can be added, down to approximately 740 feet depending on the available GIS data.*
- Show lake elevation data on the figure corresponding to boat counts. *This information was collected on many dates and across reservoir zones, and therefore, there is not one lake level that can be referenced on the map; this information can be provided as an appendix to the report and is also incorporated in the boating density maps included in the report.*
- Assess parking infrastructure at marinas. *There is a parking shortfall at several marina-parking areas.*
- Figure 5.1-3 will be expanded to all areas. *It was noted that recreation safety is addressed in Study R2 (Recreation Safety Assessment). It is unclear whether there are any specific hazards that become problematic at specific lake levels (other than the shoreline). However, one participant noted that there are roughly 30 hazards marked with 20-foot tethers throughout the reservoir.*

- What is the difference between the social capacity (i.e., visitor expectations) and recreation standards? *Additional information/data will be brought to next month's RSWG meeting.*
- There are concerns with the Spillway boat launch being inaccessible if the access road is closed for security purposes. *Potential facility closures are dependent on the terror alert level; these contingencies are beyond the scope of this study report and out of DWR's control.*

#### **R14 – Assess Regional Recreation and Barriers to Recreation**

Iris Mayes (EDAW), the lead author for this report, was in attendance at the meeting. She gave a revised PowerPoint presentation that addressed the comments from the previous RSWG meeting and Action Item #R105 (see Attachment 4). Additional information and/or comments provided at the RSWG meeting are detailed below:

- Page 5-63 (Table 5.5.5): There are issues with the conclusions regarding satisfaction levels. How do these responses compare to other sites based on professional experience? It is perceived that the high satisfaction levels are due to the high number of local respondents.
- Why didn't Lake Oroville develop like Lake Shasta?
- It was noted that Lake Oroville is not necessarily like other regional recreation sites surveyed because Oroville is unique in that it has related facilities (e.g., Thermalito Forebay, Thermalito Afterbay, OWA, etc...).
- There is concern with the statement regarding decreasing (or stable) recreation use at Lake Oroville since the mid-1970s. This is not uncommon per the professional opinions of Doug Rischbieter and Tom Wegge.
- In response to Action Item R105, the re-assessment of special events has changed the prior conclusions in the report. The new conclusion is that special events "may" attract more visitors to the Lake Oroville area. Additional research regarding this issue is out of the scope for this study.
- Special events serve as a marketing tool for the Lake Oroville area.
- It is important to attract non-County visitors to the Lake Oroville area to spur economic growth.

### **Study Reports**

The Consulting Team distributed and presented five new study reports at the RSWG meeting: R3 (Assess Relationship of Project Operations and Recreation); R4 (Assess Relationship of Fish & Wildlife Management and Recreation); R12 (Projected Recreation Use); R18 (Recreation Activity, Spending, and Associated Economic Impacts); and R19 (Fiscal Impacts). The PowerPoint presentations for these studies are included as Attachments 5 through 9, respectively.

During and after each presentation, there was opportunity for brief questions and answers, which are bulleted below. The RSWG was instructed to review the reports and provide comments in writing or for discussion at the next RSWG meeting.

#### **R3 – Assess Relationship of Project Operations and Recreation**

- This study includes the benchmark (2001 and 2020) hydrology modeling results.
- The focus is on peak recreation season only.
- Where did the operations information on decreased water deliveries come from?
- Are other license provisions (e.g., Lake Almanor) considered in the hydrology modeling? The Facilitator explained that the modeling assumes the same (historical) deliveries and flows into the Oroville Facilities.

- Minor future lake level changes in the modeling are attributed to the system already operating at maximum capacity.
- The Engineering and Operations Work Group is still contemplating warmer water for local agricultural interests and colder water for fisheries.
- It is difficult to launch boats at Foreman Creek Road during low lake levels due to muddy conditions.
- Why do the Afterbay pump-back operations occur on weekends? Although infrequent, these operations are based on power prices, demands, and delivery schedules. The weekly fluctuation of water levels at the Afterbay is typical for such facilities.
- Why was Burma Road not considered? It was not considered because it is not a “formal” boat access area. It was clarified that this location is not affected by project operations.

#### ***R4 – Assess Relationship of Fish & Wildlife Management and Recreation***

- Is there the possibility of fee-demonstration arrangements, where the fees are used for facility development and not administration? Funding issues are addressed in Study R5 (Assess Recreation Areas Management).
- There is a suggestion for the establishment of a non-profit foundation that could possibly be tied to a volunteer program. It was noted that agencies (i.e., DWR) couldn’t solicit volunteers.
- Evaluate success of volunteer programs for areas such as OWA.
- It was noted that a Biological Opinion is currently being written for the Project, which evaluates the direct effect of recreation on wildlife resources in the OWA. It will be available later this year.
- Are OWA management issues new or existing license issues? OWA activities affect both the new and existing license.

#### ***R12 – Projected Recreation Use***

- No recreation-related improvements were considered in projecting recreation use.
- What is the definition of “decline” when referencing declining recreation use? Is it the rate of participation based on population or absolute numbers?
- Are the projections constrained by facilities? No, they are not. Study R8 (Carrying Capacity) will evaluate carrying capacity issues.
- Different recreation areas have different projections based on differences in activity mixes.
- How are the factors that drive the recreation use estimates derived? The methodology is dependent on the activity in question.

#### ***R18 – Recreation Activity, Spending, and Associated Economic Impacts***

- *No questions or notes were recorded due to lack of time at the meeting. Tom Wegge will be available at the next RSWG meeting to discuss the two economic studies (R18 and R19) and to answer questions.*

#### ***R19 – Fiscal Impacts***

- *See R18 above.*

### **Cultural / Land Use Cross-Resource Meeting De-brief**

The Cultural Resources Work Group (CRWG) held their regularly scheduled meeting on April 20, 2004, which was followed by a cross-resource task force meeting with representatives from the Land Use, Land Management, and Aesthetics Work Group, the Recreation and Socioeconomics Work Group, and the Environmental Work Group. All works groups have identified potential cross-resource impacts in their own work group setting, but this was the first coordination meeting

between these work groups. An example of potential cross-resource impacts includes conflicts in the Foreman Creek area between the recreation interests (i.e., new recreation facilities) and cultural interests (i.e., closure of recreation access to some areas). The Task Force also provided quality assurance (QA) on the mapping of proposed resource actions. The meeting was for information-sharing purposes only, and no decisions were made at the meeting. A summary of this Task Force meeting is appended to these notes as Attachment 10.

## **Other**

A participant asked whether the study plans are included in the study reports being distributed to the RSWG. The study plans would serve as a tool to determine if all of the tasks in the study plans have been completed; this represents a major concern of the Dangermond Group, which is representing the JPA. A decision was made to not include the study plans in the reports. It was explained that not all of the tasks in the study reports were necessarily completed in the exact manner outlined in the study plans, but the work was accomplished in the “spirit” of each study plan. The final, approved study plans are available on the Relicensing web site and abstracts were included in Scoping Document 2. Any inconsistencies between the study reports and study plans can be addressed when responding to comments in the RSWG.

## **Next Steps**

The next RSWG meeting will be held on the following date/time:

Date: Thursday, June 24, 2004  
Time: 6:00 to 10:00 PM Note: The RSWG agreed that depending on the number of reports that will be ready for distribution and discussion, the June meeting may be extended to start earlier.  
Location: Oroville

## **Action Items**

The following list of action items identified by the RSWG includes a description of the action, the participant responsible for the action, and item status.

**Action Item #R109:** Provide additional information/data to describe the difference between the social capacity (i.e., visitor expectations) and the recreation standards.  
**Responsible:** Consultant Team  
**Due Date:** June 24, 2004

**Action Item #R110:** Evaluate the success of volunteer programs for areas such as OWA.  
**Responsible:** Consultant Team  
**Due Date:** June 24, 2004

**Action Item #R111:** Attach the Cross-Resource Task Force meeting flip chart notes (April 20, 2004) to this meeting summary.  
**Responsible:** Consultant Team  
**Due Date:** June 24, 2004